



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Roundabout coming to State Route 206/Bruce Road intersection**

SPOKANE – In an effort to reduce collisions and improve traffic flow, the Washington State Department of Transportation will construct a “Roundabout” at the SR 206/Bruce Road intersection near Spokane in 2005. The work will get underway in the spring and construction should be complete by early fall. Motorists will then be able to move through the intersection without stopping, provided that they yield to vehicles already in the facility. This improvement allows motorists to move more safely and efficiently through this intersection.

Although the existing intersection meets all applicable standards and has at least ½ mile of visibility in all directions, there have been a number of collisions at this intersection. WSDOT chose a roundabout for this location in an attempt to improve the intersection's safety record by reducing the number and severity of collisions. An average of 3,500 vehicles travel through this portion of SR 206 each day with traffic on Bruce Road averaging about 6,700. The current posted speed limit on SR 206 near this intersection is 50 miles-per-hour and the speed on Bruce Road is 45 mph. This will be the second time WSDOT has built a roundabout on a rural highway with high speed limits. A similar facility on State Route 203, just east of Redmond near Duvall, opened in September. That particular location has double the traffic volume as the SR 206 intersection. In the Eastern Region, the WSDOT has constructed a roundabout on US 395 in Colville.

Roundabouts funnel traffic from several directions in and out of a doughnut-shaped intersection with no traffic lights. Traffic travels one-way while in the roundabout. A roundabout accommodates intersections with a high volume of left turns better than a multi-phased traffic signal. Statistics show fewer accidents happen at intersections with roundabouts when compared to those with traditional traffic signals. In addition to reducing congestion and increasing safety, roundabouts eliminate maintenance costs associated with traffic signals, which amount to approximately \$3,000 per year, per intersection. Electricity costs are also reduced at each intersection by an average of \$1,500 per year.

The design of the SR 206 roundabout will have one lane of circulating traffic. Motorists on SR 206 or Bruce Road will enter the roundabout when the path is clear, travel in the counterclockwise rotation around the center island, and exit to one of the three other legs. The roundabout will also be able to accommodate larger vehicles such as busses, trucks, and semi tractor/trailer combinations.

***How To Drive a Roundabout***

- As a driver approaches a roundabout, there will be a YIELD sign. The driver should slow down, watch for pedestrians and bicyclists and be prepared to stop if necessary.
- When a driver enters, he/she yields to circulating traffic on the left, but does not stop if the way is clear.
- The roundabout will have ONE WAY signs mounted in the center island. They help guide traffic and indicate that the driver must stay to the right of the center island.
- When approaching the desired exit leg, the driver should turn on his/her right turn signal and watch for pedestrians and bicyclists as he/she exits.
- Left turns are completed by traveling around the central island.

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SR 206 Roundabout

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Roundabouts are used extensively throughout the United States and Europe to reduce vehicle crashes, traffic delays, fuel consumption, air pollution and construction costs. They have been used successfully to control traffic speeds in residential areas and are accepted as one of the safest types of intersection design. Roundabouts have been shown to reduce fatal and injury crashes as much as 76 percent in the United States. Research also suggests that roundabouts are safer than signalized intersections for pedestrians. A study by Ryerson Polytechnic and the University of Maine shows that installing roundabouts result in a 39% decrease in crashes, a 76% decrease in injury accidents and a 90% drop in fatal or incapacitating injuries.

Because a high-speed roundabout is a new concept for the Spokane area, the WSDOT will hold an informational meeting to introduce the concept to area residents. The meeting is tentatively scheduled for late January 2005.

WSDOT project engineering office and traffic engineer office personnel will be on hand to answer questions about the design and operations of the roundabout. Displays of the new SR 206 facility and videos on how to use them will be available for viewing. An internet page for the project is currently in development and will be available soon.

The Department will advertise for construction bids in April 2005 with construction slated to begin in late June.

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